

Charles W. Coffin collection

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July 22, 2014

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Books and Manuscripts
140 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204
317-232-3671

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical Note/Historical Note/Administrative History</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents</u>	4
<u>Arrangement</u>	4
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5

Summary Information

Repository	Rare Books and Manuscripts
Title	Charles W. Coffin collection
Date	1851, 1964, 1966
Extent	0.01 Cubic feet 1 folder
Language	English
Text [Folder]	S274

Preferred Citation

Charles W. Coffin collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library

Biographical Note/Historical Note/Administrative History

Charles W. Coffin was born in 1815 in New York. He married Jane Brown (1826-1870) and had two daughters, Clara W. (1849-1878) and Mary Emma (1850-1896). Both girls, as well as their mother, were born in Indiana. Charles went to the California gold fields with Mr. A. Cochel of New Albany, Indiana. Because Mr. Cochel had been to California and planned to go again, Mr. Coffin asked permission to accompany him. Charles's partner, John Carmichael, also traveled with them. They went to Diamond Springs on the south fork of the the American River, ten miles from Sutter's Mill. Charles died on May 25, 1851 after an illness of ten days. He is buried in the local cemetery in Diamond Springs.

Scope and Contents

The oldest item is a letter written on one folded paper making four pages. Mr. A. Cochel wrote the letter in ink on May 26, 1851, from Diamond Springs, California, to Mrs. C. W. Coffin, to tell her about the death of her husband on May 25. He wrote: "10 days ago, he complained of a griping in his bowels but did not think of anything dangerous until the 2nd day he commenced discharging blood and his bowels very sore and painful at which time he left camp and went to town which is 1/2 or 3/4th of a mile off, to a hotel." Mr. Cochel told Jane Brown Coffin that the doctor came every day to attend her husband, and that he died peacefully. After giving an account of Charles's money, which amounted to \$428.00, Mr. Cochel and three other men signed the letter. One of the signers was John Carmichael, Charles's partner.

The second item in the collection is a family tree, dated May 26, 1964. The genealogy begins with Charles W. Coffin marrying Jane Brown, and concludes with Roy James Owen (born May 19, 1888, in Indiana) and his two sisters, Hazel and Mary. The collection was donated by Roy James Owen.

The last item is excerpts from a letter written by Frank Owen, dated August 31, 1966, about his visit to Diamond Springs, California, for the purpose of finding his ancestor's grave. However, the writing on the wooden grave markers was obliterated, so he was unable to locate the site of Charles W. Coffin's burial.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by chronologically.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Rare Books and Manuscripts

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Custodial History

This collection was received by Rare Books and Manuscripts as a donation from Roy James Owen, a descendant of Charles W. Coffin, on 1964/05/26.

Accruals

No further additions are expected.

Processing Information

Collection processing and finding aid completed 2014/07/10 by Nikki Stoddard Schofield.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- California Gold Rush, 1848-1852
- Correspondence
- Family history